

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks**  
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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

**PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action**

**1. Project Title:** Treasure Shooting Association

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

- (1) Build solid concrete Trap house with power connection
- (2) Build Clubhouse/storage facility
- (3) Purchase and install an automatic trap machine

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:** Land is leased from Richard D. Cunningham and Dana Cunningham and is located on the NE ¼ Sec. 25, Twp. 6 N., 35 E. M.P.M. The range is located approximately 3 ½ miles from Hysham in Treasure County Montana.

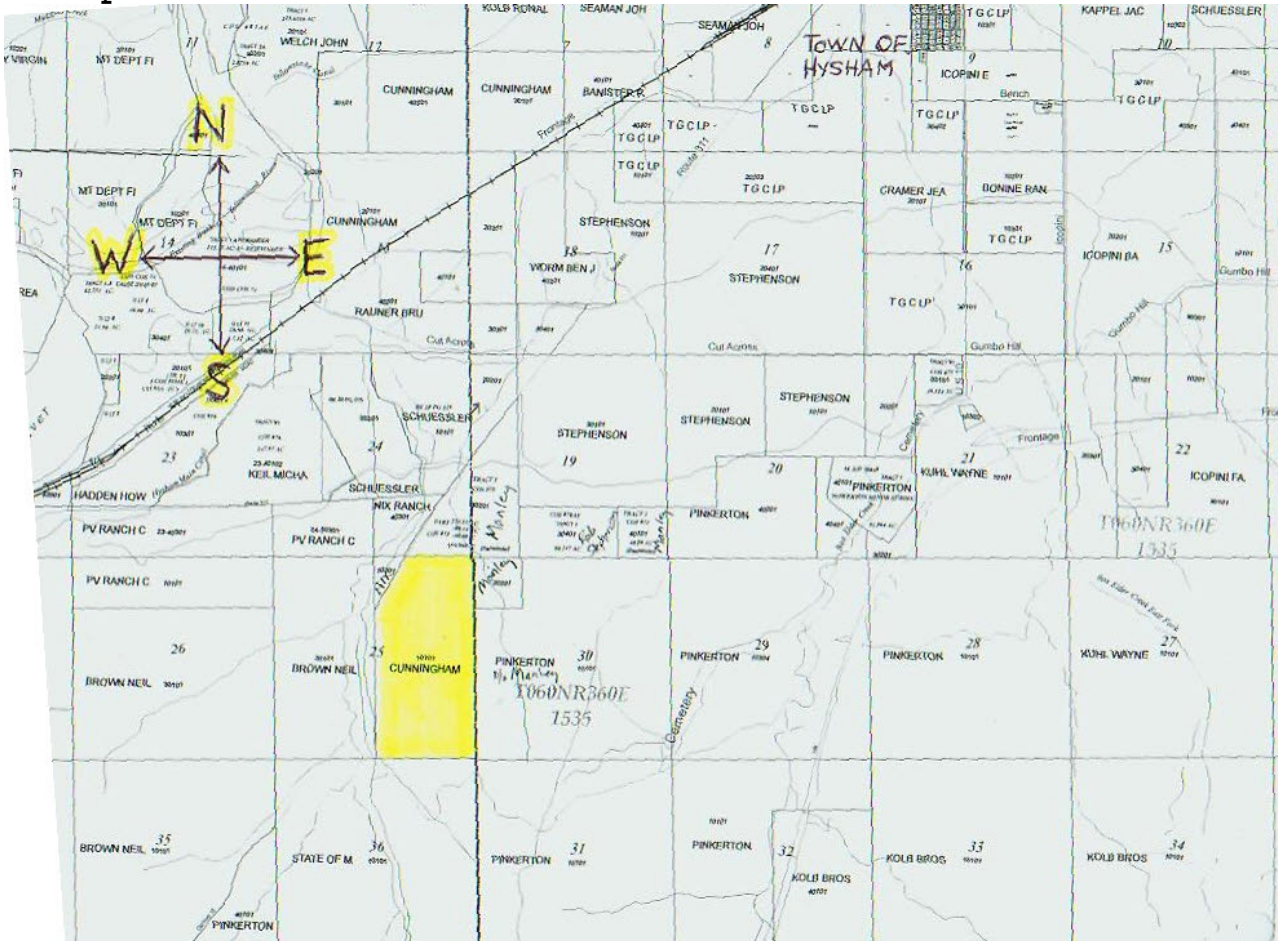
**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

**5. Need for the Action(s):** Increased recreational opportunities, enhanced safety, and improved security. The concrete trap house will provide protection for trap machine(s) and anyone who may happen to be stationed there during operations. The Club house/storage building will provide meeting, education/training and administrative space for club activities and other user groups. This facility will additionally double as a storage facility for various range equipment and supplies. The automatic trap machine will further improve the safety and efficiency by eliminating the need to have someone in the trap house to load and operate the trap machine. The automatic trap machine will hold 550 targets, requiring much less manual loading, provide the ability to throw double targets and fewer stoppage to load targets in the machine. (See paragraph 10).

**6. Objectives for the Action(s):** To add the opportunity for trap shooting and increased shooter participation while improving the safety and security of the range operations and facilities. Trap shooting is very popular and will draw more members to the club and increase member participation in shooting sports. The range will become more attractive and usable for

Hunter Education, 4-H, Law Enforcement and other community organizations. The new building will provide a much needed meeting or training room, administrative area, and range storage facility (See para. 2 & 5 above).

## 7. Maps:



**Figure 1 - Area map around Hysham showing location of range on the NE ¼ of the Cunningham Ranch (In Yellow).**

**8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:** The area leased is 320 acres and approximately 80 acres are used in the shooting and archery programs. However, the proposed range enhancements are limited to a much smaller area within the active range complex (See para. 10).

**9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):** The area affected is the proposed 80 acre, relatively unimproved shooting range(s) of the Treasure Shooting Association located on 320 leased acres approximately 2 ½ miles from Hysham, Montana in Treasure County (See Para. 3). The terrain of

the shooting ranges is well suited to provide safety for all shooting disciplines, with a high long ridge to the east, which provides a tremendous natural backstop. This is an isolated area surrounded by agricultural lands, primarily grazing (See figure 2 below).

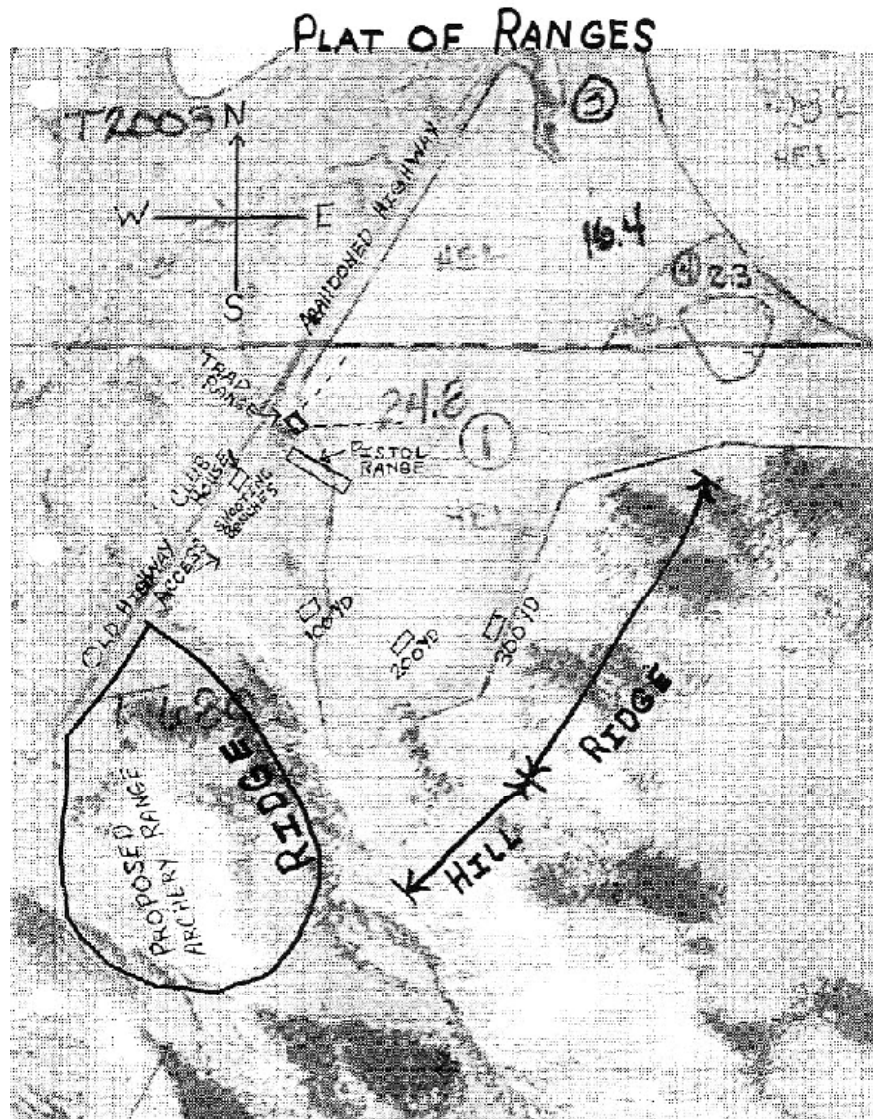


Figure 2 - Plat of range and proposed developments. Trap Range is located at upper end of range center left.

**10. Description of Project:** In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2009.

See paragraph 2 for outline of proposed actions.

- (1) Build solid concrete 8'X8' Trap house with power connection. Construct a non-pitted concrete trap house. Some backhoe work will be required to dig a "pocket" and level it for the house floor. Additionally a 400' utility trench will be required to bring power to the trap house. The trap house meets the NRA specifications for design and safety.
- (2) Build Clubhouse/storage facility is needed for administration, meetings, training and storage. It will be a 12'X 16' wood frame building with 8' sidewalls and a sloped roof. Building will be placed on a treated wood foundation.
- (3) Purchase and install an automatic trap machine in the newly constructed concrete trap house described in item 1 above.

**11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

**(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
None	

**Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$9,116

**12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:**

In addition to club members shooting rifle, pistol, muzzleloaders and trap, the facilities are available for Hunter Education, Law enforcement, 4-H, Boy Scouts and other community organizations. The property is also open to non-members to shoot whenever it does not conflict with the Shooting Association activities.

**13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:** Notices in the Hysham Echo advertised the organization of the Shooting association on January 5 & 12, 2006. Everyone interested was invited to attend the first organizational meeting held on January 18 at the Hysham Community Center. The future of the association and the proposed improvements and possibilities were presented and discussed at that organizational meeting. No additional public involvement was or is planned. Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been further discussed and finalized within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

**14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Eldon Wahl, P.O. Box 96, Hysham, MT 59038, 406-342-5528

**16. Other Pertinent Information:** Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 11, 2007.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

**Abbreviated Checklist** - The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				<b>X</b>		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				<b>X</b>		<b>#2</b>
3. Introduction of new species into an area				<b>X</b>		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				<b>X</b>		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Existing water right or reservation				<b>X</b>		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				<b>X</b>		<b>#7</b>
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				<b>X</b>		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				<b>X</b>		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				<b>X</b>		
11. Aesthetics				<b>X</b>		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**2. & 5.** There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands.

**7.** Soil disruption for this site will be very localized and erosion control measures will be instituted where necessary.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				<b>X</b>		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				<b>X</b>		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				<b>X</b>		
4. Agricultural production				<b>X</b>		
5. Human health				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				<b>X</b>		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				<b>X</b>		<b>#7</b>
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				<b>X</b>		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				<b>X</b>		<b>#9</b>
10. Demands for government services				<b>X</b>		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				<b>X</b>		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**5.** Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. The terrain surrounding the range is well suited for safety, with a natural backstop in the form of a ridge running along the east side.

**7.** Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate hunter education and public shooting.

**9.** This is a rural area with a low population density. The Association site is completely surrounded by various agricultural operations. There are no houses or farmsteads within ¾ mile of the shooting range and none are in the direction fire.

### **Part III. Environmental Consequences**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** No

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** No

**Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:**

- **Alternative A** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project)
  - (1) Build solid concrete Trap house with power connection
  - (2) Build Clubhouse/storage facility
  - (3) Purchase and install an automatic trap machine
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** area will remain as an active shooting area operating without a meeting/storage facility, without a concrete trap house and with borrowed manually operated trap machines

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

Two alternatives have been considered, A (Proposed Alternative) and B (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (A) nor the no action alternative (B) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences for the acceptance of alternatives A to improve shooting sports opportunities, and to provide improved safety and security.
- The No Action Alternative would be not to improve the range and continue on with present shooting activities without increased shooting opportunities and improved safety. Land use would remain the same. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

**Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

None

**List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):**

None

**Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks



Eldon Wahl, P.O. Box 96, Hysham, MT 59038

#### **PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the projects reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties leased by the Treasure Shooting Association and in complete concurrence with the leaser. The proposed low impact activities, and the compliance with NRA design standards and commonly accepted safety practices, along with the increased recreational opportunities, indicates that this should be considered the final version of this environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The desire to provide increased recreational opportunities to its members and the public in a safe and reliable manner indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for improvements to the Treasure Shooting Association as outlined in para. 2 & 10.

**EA prepared by:** GENE R. HICKMAN  
Ecological Assessments  
Helena, MT 59602

**Date Completed:** July 28, 2007

#### **PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

**Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

None Required

**Describe public involvement, if any:**

None